

Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

What is the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship?

The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship is a merit-based program established in 1988 and is administered by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. The annual award amount for the freshman year is up to \$6,700. The award amount for the sophomore, junior and senior years is up to \$7,500 per year. Half of the Scholarship is awarded in the fall term and half in the spring. The Scholarship must be applied directly toward the cost of attendance, less any other gift aid received. Assuming continued eligibility, Palmetto Fellows may receive scholarship funding for a maximum of eight consecutive terms of full-time study toward the first bachelor's degree or ten consecutive terms of full-time study toward the first approved five-year bachelor's degree at an eligible four-year institution in South Carolina.

Purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship:

- RECOGNIZE the most academically talented high school seniors in S.C.;
- ENCOURAGE academically talented students to attend college in the State; and
- RETAIN talented minority students who might otherwise pursue studies outside the State.

Initial Eligibility Requirements:

General Requirements:

- In order to be eligible to apply for a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, a high school senior must also meet all of the following general eligibility requirements:
 - 1) Be enrolled in an approved SC public or private high school, an approved SC home school program of study or a preparatory high school located outside the State while a dependent of a legal resident of South Carolina;
 - 2) Be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident (who meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State residency statutes);
 - 3) Be a legal resident of South Carolina as defined in applicable State statutes governing the determination of residency for tuition and fee purposes;
 - 4) Be seriously considering attending, have applied, or have been accepted for admission to an eligible four-year institution in South Carolina;
 - 5) Certify that he/she has never been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any second or subsequent alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year by submitting a signed affidavit to the college financial aid office; and
 - 6) Cannot be a recipient of the LIFE Scholarship, SC HOPE Scholarship or Lottery Tuition Assistance in the same academic year.

Academic Requirements:

- **For Early Awards**, the guidance counselor/school representative must submit the application and required documentation to the Commission on Higher Education for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship by **December 15th**. If the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday the deadline is the preceding Friday (students cannot use the Early Awards criteria to be eligible for the Late Awards). Students are eligible to apply if they meet one of the following sets of academic requirements:
 1. Score at least 1200 on the SAT (27 on the ACT)¹ by the November national test administration, earn a minimum 3.50 cumulative GPA² on the SC Uniform Grading Policy (UGP) at the end of the junior year, and rank in the top six percent³ of the class at the end of either the sophomore or the junior year;

OR

 2. Score at least 1400 on the SAT (32 on the ACT)¹ by the November national test administration and earn a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA² on the SC UGP at the end of the junior year.
- **For Late Awards**, the guidance counselor/school representative must submit the application and required documentation to the Commission on Higher Education for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

by **June 15th**. If the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday the deadline is the preceding Friday. High school seniors are eligible apply if they meet one of the following sets of academic requirements:

1. Score at least 1200 on the SAT (27 on the ACT)¹ by the June national test administration of the senior year; earn a minimum 3.50 cumulative GPA² on the SC UGP at the end of the senior year; and, rank in the top six percent³ of the class at the end of the sophomore, junior or senior year;

OR

2. Score at least 1400 on the SAT (32 on the ACT)¹ by the June national test administration of the senior year and earn a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA² on the SC UGP at the end of the senior year.

Private institutions that do not utilize the SC Uniform Grading Policy, out-of-state high schools, and third option must contact the Commission to determine which eligibility criteria must be used to qualify. If a school does not rank as a policy, the second eligibility criteria must be met.

SC UGP Link: <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/131/documents/SCUniformGradingPolicy.pdf>

¹ See Question 1 for detailed information regarding the minimum SAT/ACT score requirements.

² GPAs must be reported to at least two decimal places and cannot be rounded.

³ Rank is calculated by multiplying the number in class by six percent. If the result is not a whole number, then you should round it up to the next whole number. For example, a class size of 185 students would include the top twelve students since 11.1 rounds up to twelve ($185 \times 6\% = 11.1$, rounded to the next whole number of 12).

Frequently Asked Questions

How is the qualifying score on the SAT (and equivalent ACT score) determined?

The score on the SAT must be calculated by using the highest Math score combined with the highest Critical Reading score. Students cannot use the Writing subsection score to meet the minimum SAT score. The score on the ACT is determined based on the composite score at one test sitting.

When is the last SAT/ACT date used to qualify for the scholarship?

For **Early Awards**, test scores will be accepted through the November test administration of the senior year.

For **Late Awards**, test scores will be accepted through the June national test administration of the senior year. Students taking the June test administration date must have scores sent directly to the Commission by designating the following codes: SAT 4313; ACT 6326

Student's taking the June test administration date must ensure that their scores are received by the Commission on Higher Education by July 31st.

Students taking the June test administration date **must** have their guidance counselor/school representative complete the electronic application by the deadline date if they wish to be considered. Guidance counselors/school representatives must submit all other application information by the established June deadline and list June test taking applicants as "pending."

If I attend high school out-of-state, am I still eligible to apply?

Yes. Students who attend out-of-state preparatory high schools may be eligible to apply if they are residents of South Carolina. These students are personally responsible for contacting the Commission about the application process and must adhere to the established deadlines. ***In order for out-of-state students to use their current rank as one of the eligibility criteria, the guidance counselor from the out-of-state high school must provide the high school's grading system to the Commission on Higher Education. Upon review, the Commission will determine if the out-of-state high school's grading system is comparable to the current SC UGP.***

The current rank from the out-of-state high school may be used if the grading scales are determined to be comparable. If the grading systems are determined non-comparable, then the current rank cannot be used. In this case, out-of-state students must: 1) use the alternate criteria (score at least 1400 on the SAT (32 on ACT) and earn a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA based on the SC UGP) to qualify for the scholarship; OR 2) the guidance counselor from the out-of-state school has the option of converting the cumulative GPA's of the applicant's entire graduating class to the current SC Uniform Grading Policy to determine if the student ranks within the top six percent. In addition, the guidance counselor must submit the ranking report that identifies all students in the applicant's class and their respective GPA's based on the SC Uniform Grading Policy. The student's high school guidance counselor must convert the student's grades to the SC UGP to determine if the student meets the minimum cumulative GPA. The conversion must be attached to the transcript and the SC UGP GPA must be listed on the transcript. The out-of-state high school guidance counselor, in cooperation with the student, is responsible for submitting all required information by the established deadline. (Note: A preparatory high school is defined as a school recognized by the state in which the school is located to offer curricula through the twelfth grade and prepares students for college entrance.)

SC UGP Link: <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/131/documents/SCUniformGradingPolicy.pdf>

If I home school, what criteria must I meet to be eligible to apply?

If using rank to be eligible to apply, students must home school through a South Carolina approved home school association that ranks their members. The home school association must submit a ranking report on the association's letterhead that includes class rank and GPA based on the SC UGP for all home school students in the student's class.

Students may also be eligible to apply by scoring at least 1400 on the SAT (32 on ACT) and earning a minimum 4.0 cumulative GPA based on the SC UGP (without any regard to class rank). Students must meet all other eligibility criteria. The home school association, in cooperation with the home school student, is responsible for submitting all required information by the established deadline.

Third option must use the alternate criteria.

How do I qualify if I attend a high school that has a small class size (less than twenty students)?

If the school as a policy ranks its students, only the top two students shall be considered regardless of whether they rank in the top six percent of their class, if they also scored at least 1200 on the SAT (27 on the ACT) and earned a minimum 3.50 cumulative GPA on the SC UGP. If a student does not rank number one or number two in the class, he/she may also qualify by scoring at least 1400 on the SAT (32 on the ACT) and earning a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA on the SC UGP (without any regard to class rank). Students must meet all other eligibility criteria.

What is the application process?

Guidance counselors/school representatives are provided application materials through the SC Guidance Counselor Listserv. Guidance counselors/school representatives identify eligible students in their high schools who meet the criteria of the scholarship. The guidance counselor/school representative must submit an electronic application through CollegeNet by the established deadline date. Additionally, guidance counselors/school representatives must submit the required documentation to CHE on all eligible students and by in receipt of CHE by the established deadline date. If the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday the deadline is the preceding Friday.

The assistance of counselors is required to ensure that eligible students are given the opportunity to apply by providing the application information to these students. Application materials must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadlines. The Early Award deadline is December 15th and the Late Award deadline is June 15th of the year of high school graduation. Please contact your high school guidance counselor for additional information. **It is the responsibility of the high school to**

contact the Commission on Higher Education for application information.

After submitting the application, when should I expect to be notified about the status of my application?

Students who meet the Early Award deadline in December will be notified in March if they meet the academic criteria.

Students who meet the Late Award deadline in June will be notified in August if they meet the academic criteria. Notifications are sent by e-mail to the address provided by the student on the electronic application.

Upon notification of the conditional award, students are provided a Designation Form to complete and return to the Commission. Students must designate the institution they plan to attend the Fall term even if they plan on attending an out of state institution. Students must return the Scholarship Designation Form to the Commission on Higher Education by the established date. Failure to submit the Designation Form by the established deadline may affect scholarship fund distribution.

What is a conditional award notification?

Students who met the academic requirements for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and have been notified by the Commission of a conditional award notification must prove both South Carolina residency requirements AND proof of US citizenship/legal permanent resident at their four-year institution. If proof of both requirements is not met, the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship will not be awarded.

Once I have been awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, am I required to immediately enroll in college?

Students selected as Palmetto Fellows must enter an eligible four-year institution the fall term immediately following high school graduation.

If my academic major is not offered in South Carolina, can I still receive the Palmetto Fellow Scholarship if I will attend a college located outside the State?

No. Students selected as Palmetto Fellows must enroll in an eligible institution, even if the student's major is not offered within the State. However, you may be eligible for the Academic Common Market (based on your enrollment in an eligible academic program at participating institutions in the Southern region). Additional information regarding this program is available at the following website:

www.che.sc.gov/AcademicAffairs/ACM_Information.htm

Am I eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship if I attend an out-of-state four-year institution and then transfer back to an eligible four-year institution in South Carolina?

Yes, only if you were conditionally awarded the Scholarship during your senior year and you meet the continued eligibility requirements. Students must complete a Reapplication Form located at www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/PalmettoFellows/files/ReapplicationForm.pdf. If a student transfers midyear, it is the responsibility of the student to complete the Reapplication Form. It is also the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to cover tuition and fees at the transferring school until confirmation of the transfer request has been completed by the Commission.

Am I eligible to apply for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship if I complete my high school graduation requirements early?

An application must be submitted during the academic year you plan to graduate from high school. If awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, you must enroll and begin receiving the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship no later than the fall term immediately following high school graduation.

- **For seniors who graduate mid-year (December):**

Students who graduate mid-year their senior year must apply during the Early Awards process.

Students who choose to attend an eligible four-year institution for the spring term may be eligible for the LIFE Scholarship by completing an Early Graduation Application at their institution. Students would change from the LIFE Scholarship to the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship the subsequent fall term.

Students may choose to delay college entrance until the fall term immediately following high school graduation (students are not required to attend the spring term). The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship would be available upon enrollment the subsequent fall term.

Once I have been awarded a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, are there specific criteria I must meet in order to retain eligibility?

Yes. You must do the following to renew your Scholarship each academic year:

- Be continuously enrolled full-time at a four-year eligible institution at the time of Scholarship disbursement;
- Earn a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA at your home institution for graduation purposes by the end of each academic year (**beginning with fall, including spring and ending with the immediately succeeding summer**);
- Earn at least 30 nonremedial credit hours for graduation purposes by the end of each academic year (**beginning with fall, including spring and ending with immediately succeeding summer**). Exempted credit hours (i.e., AP, IB, CLEP), credit hours earned before high school graduation (i.e., dual enrollment courses) and credit hours earned the summer term immediately following high school graduation cannot be used to meet the annual credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship;
- Maintain South Carolina residency as defined in applicable State statutes governing the determination of residency for tuition and fee purposes;
- Cannot be in default or owe a refund/repayment on any state or financial aid by submitting a signed affidavit to your college financial aid office;
- Certify that you have never been convicted of any felonies and have not been convicted of any second or subsequent alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year by submitting a signed affidavit to your college financial aid office; and
- Complete any other documentation required by your college financial aid office.

May I use exempted credit hours, credit hours earned prior to high school graduation or credit hours earned the summer term immediately following high school graduation toward the annual credit hour requirement?

No. Students must earn 30 nonremedial credit hours each academic year. However, for Enhancement purposes only, these hours may be used to meet the fourteen credit hours required by the end of the freshman year.

What happens if I am convicted of an alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor offense?

Students who have been adjudicated delinquent or have been convicted or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to their **first** alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor offense will be held harmless and their Scholarship eligibility will not be affected. However, any second or subsequent alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor offense will make you ineligible for the Scholarship for one academic year after the adjudication, conviction, or plea occurred. Scholarship eligibility will be forfeited the next academic year (fall and spring terms) immediately following the second or subsequent conviction(s).

What happens if I am convicted of a felony?

Students who have been convicted of a felony are no longer eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

If I am mobilized by the military, will I lose my eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship?

The terms you are mobilized will not count against the maximum terms of eligibility. **You are required to re-enroll at an eligible four-year institution within twelve months upon being demobilized.** You are also required to provide official documentation to verify your military mobilization to your college financial aid office. (Note: Military mobilization is defined as any situation in which the U.S. Department of Defense orders members of the United States Armed Forces to active duty away from their normal duty assignment during a time of war or national emergency.)

What requirements must I meet in order to renew my Palmetto Fellows Scholarship if I qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973?

Students who qualify under the ADA must register with their college disability services office. The Disability Services Officer must provide written documentation to the office of financial aid before the start of each academic year. The documentation should include at a minimum whether the student has been approved to be enrolled less than full-time or earn less than the required thirty credit hours per year. In order to renew the Scholarship each academic year, the student must complete the required number of hours approved by the college Disability Services Provider and earn a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA at the home institution for graduation purposes.

What happens if my cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0 or I don't earn thirty credit hours by the end of the academic year?

Students have the opportunity to increase their GPA by the end of the academic year (summer term). Students must attend their home institution if they intend to increase their GPA in the summer. Students may attend another eligible institution if they wish to increase their credit hours provided that their home institution will accept the credit hours for graduation purposes.

If the continued eligibility requirements are not maintained, you forfeit continued participation in the program and your Scholarship will be discontinued. However, if a legitimate extenuating circumstance affected your ability to meet the renewal requirements, you may submit an appeal by the October deadline. Appeals must be submitted immediately following your notification of failing to meet the renewal requirements. Applications for appeal may be obtained from the Commission on Higher Education's web site at: www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/Appeals/AppealsHm.htm

If I need to drop a class for the term, will I automatically lose the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship?

No. As long as you are enrolled full-time at the time of scholarship disbursement, you have until the end of the academic year (including the immediately succeeding summer) to complete the required thirty credit hours. **However, before dropping any class(es), you should contact the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Coordinator at your college financial aid office. Due to varying refund periods at each college, you may be required to repay funds you received based on the date you dropped below full-time status.**

Can I use my Palmetto Fellows Scholarship to study abroad, co-op or to participate in an internship or exchange program?

Yes. You may be eligible to receive Scholarship funds if the program is approved by your college and is accepted by your college as full-time transfer credit.

Although you will not receive Scholarship funds, you may participate in a program that is approved by your college but is not eligible for full-time transfer credit. However, you are not allowed to participate in any programs that are not approved by your college. Please contact the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Coordinator at your college financial aid office for further information.

How do I transfer my Palmetto Fellows Scholarship from one eligible college to another eligible college within South Carolina?

You will need to complete the In-State Transfer Form, which is available online at:

www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/PalmettoFellows/PFS_TRANSFER_FORM.htm Transfers must receive prior approval from the Commission on Higher Education. Palmetto Fellows cannot receive funding for more than eight terms at all eligible colleges and the continued eligibility requirements must be maintained. If a student transfers midyear, it is the responsibility of the student to complete the In State Transfer Form. It is also the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to cover tuition and fees at the transferring school until confirmation of the transfer request has been completed by the Commission.

If I graduate early from college (before using the eight terms of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funding), can I use the remaining funds toward another bachelor's degree or a graduate degree?

No. In the event of early graduation, the Scholarship is discontinued and all remaining terms are forfeited. Additionally, the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship cannot be applied to a second bachelor's degree or to graduate coursework.

Can I receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship in combination with the LIFE or SC HOPE Scholarship?

No. If you are receiving a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, you cannot receive the LIFE or SC HOPE Scholarship within the same academic year. However, if you lose your Palmetto Fellows Scholarship at the end of the year, you may be eligible to earn the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year.

Am I eligible to receive Lottery Tuition Assistance during the summer of the same academic year I receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship?

No. If you are receiving a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, you cannot receive Lottery Tuition Assistance during the same academic year. For example, if you are awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship during the fall and spring terms, then you are not eligible to receive Lottery Tuition Assistance during the immediately succeeding summer at a two-year or technical college.

Can I earn the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship once I have started college?

No. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship must be awarded during the senior year of high school. However, the LIFE Scholarship may be earned after starting college. Please review the requirements for earning the LIFE Scholarship on page three of the LIFE Scholarship Q & A document on the Commission's web site at: www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/LIFE/Frequently_Asked_Questions_for_LIFE.pdf

For more information about the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, please contact:

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 PHONE: 803-737-2262
 FAX: 803-737-3610

Although information is accurate when provided, please note that the information is subject to change based on new legislation.

Information will be updated as necessary.

The Commission also provides a news release to all major newspapers in South Carolina regarding the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and application deadlines for the current graduating class. Students who are enrolled at an out-of-state high school are personally responsible for contacting the Commission about the application process and must adhere to the same deadlines.

Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement

What is the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement?

The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement was established during the 2007 legislative session and is a merit-based incentive for Palmetto Fellows to major in mathematics and science. Palmetto Fellows are not eligible for the Enhancement during their freshman year. Palmetto Fellows may become eligible for the Enhancement beginning with their sophomore year and continuing through their senior year. The annual award amount for students receiving both the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Scholarship Enhancement cannot exceed \$10,000 (total amount of combined funds from \$7,500 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and \$2,500 Enhancement) per year. Half of the Enhancement is awarded in the fall term and half in the spring. The Enhancement must be applied directly toward the cost of attendance, less any other gift aid received. Assuming continued eligibility, Palmetto Fellows may receive Enhancement funding for a maximum of six consecutive terms of full-time study toward the first bachelor's degree at an eligible four-year institution in South Carolina. Palmetto Fellows may receive Enhancement funding for up to eight consecutive terms of full-time study toward the first approved five-year bachelor's degree or first 3 + 2 program.

Purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement:

- Increase the number of students in South Carolina who major in science and mathematics

Frequently Asked Questions

Is an application required to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement?

No. Palmetto Fellows are not required to apply for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. The student's home institution will automatically award the Enhancement beginning not sooner than the second academic year of college enrollment if the eligibility requirements are met.

What are the initial eligibility requirements for receiving the Enhancement?

Palmetto Fellows must successfully complete at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics **or** life and physical sciences **or** a combination of both by the end of their first academic year. Additionally, all Palmetto Fellows must enroll full-time and degree seeking in a declared major in mathematics or science that has been approved and assigned a CIP code by the Commission on Higher Education. Eligibility for Enhancement funds begins with the second academic year and continues through the senior year (not eligible for the Enhancement the first year). Students must meet the continued eligibility requirements for the underlying Palmetto Fellows Scholarship to be eligible for Enhancement funds.

What courses can be used to meet the fourteen credit hours required by the end of my freshman year?

To meet the required fourteen credit hours by the end of the first academic year, please refer to the list of approved courses on the Commission's web site at:

<http://www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/LIFE/Directives/Math&ScienceCourses.xls>

Additionally, the following credit hours may be used to meet the fourteen credit hours required at the end of the first academic year for Enhancement purposes only. However, these courses cannot be used to meet the annual thirty credit hours for continued eligibility for the underlying Palmetto Fellows Scholarship: 1) Exempted credit hours (i.e., AP, IB, CLEP); 2) credit hours earned while in high school (dual enrollment); 3) credit hours earned during the summer session immediately prior to the student's initial college enrollment in fall, and; 4) Pass/fail courses with a grade of "Pass" only.

What mathematics and science majors are eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement?

A list of declared majors by institution is available on the Commission's website at:

<http://www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/LIFE/Directives/Math&SciencePrograms.xls>

What eligibility requirements must I meet to continue receiving Enhancement funds?

In order to maintain the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, Palmetto Fellows must continue to declare an approved major, meet the institution's criteria for satisfactory academic progress in that major and meet all continued eligibility requirements for the underlying Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

What happens if I fail to meet the continued eligibility requirements for the Enhancement?

If the continued eligibility requirements are not maintained, you forfeit continued participation and Enhancement funding will be discontinued. You may still receive the underlying Palmetto Fellows Scholarship if you have maintained eligibility.

If you also lose eligibility for the underlying Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, you may submit an appeal by the October deadline if a legitimate extenuating circumstance affected your ability to meet the renewal requirements (for additional information, please see question seventeen in the Q & A for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship provided above). **However, students are not eligible to appeal solely for loss of their Enhancement funds.**

For more information about the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, please contact:

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